

Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter



Conservation....

Getting Back to the Basics

655 Parfet Street, RM E200C

Lakewood, CO 80215-5505

720-544-2863-P

720-544-2965-F

Highlights

by

Cathee Wilson

Acting State Conservationist



As summer ends and fall begins, it brings to mind not only seasonal transitions, but also organizational transitions. Upon a recent visit to Colorado, Chief Lancaster reaffirmed the commitment of getting back to “conservation basics” when he relayed his top three areas of emphasis for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which includes the following:

- Make conservation easier for landowners.
- Remain focused on the core missions – collecting natural resources data, developing sound practice standards, conservation planning, and providing technical assistance to farmers and ranchers – to meet the needs of our customers.
- Engage in cooperative conservation.

Chief Lancaster wants to “**Make Conservation Easier**” for our customers. He stated, “*every single agricultural producer he meets wants to pass their operation onto their children,*” and, “*it is our job and responsibility to make sure we have the tools to help them do just that.*”

In addition to Chief Lancaster’s commitment to making conservation easier for our customers, he is committed to making conservation easier for NRCS employees. Conservation made easier for NRCS employees revolves around the organizational transition of placing greater emphasis on conservation planning.

As many of you know, Allen Green recently distributed a letter to all employees outlining our

new way of managing our financial assistance programs. If you have not read this material, I highly encourage you to do so. It clearly outlines the Colorado NRCS plan for conservation planning to be at the top of the priority list.

As I begin my 21st year as a NRCS employee, having seen initiatives come and go, I am excited for us to “get back to the basics” of conservation planning.

I hope you have found opportunities to get out into the field and reconnect with our primary customer that has grown from farmers and ranchers to entire rural communities. The newly developed strategy and organizational transition of getting back to “conservation basics” is very exciting!

I could not close this “Highlight” without mentioning the opportunities for “acting” details. One of the best ways to stretch ourselves both professionally and personally is to perform details in an “acting” position.

As we come to the closing of fiscal year 2007 and plan for fiscal year 2008, I encourage you to consider including an “Acting” detail in your Employee Development Plan. *Best Wishes!*

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Raising Tamarisk Awareness on Colorado's Western Slope

Written By: Alisa Mazzocchi, Delta Conservation District GIS Technician, and Shana Harness, NRCS Soil Conservationist

The Delta Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in conjunction with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, hosted a public tamarisk information session.

The session was designed to help landowners learn about the negative impacts this species incurs on riparian areas, and the biological and mechanical options available to control the species.

The event took place at the Division of Wildlife Escalante State Wildlife Area, where extensive tamarisk removal projects have been successfully completed.

The morning began with informational presentations by John Heideman, of the Tamarisk Coalition, providing background information on the tamarisk species and methods of control.

"Tamarisk covers approximately 1.6 million acres of riparian lands within the western United States, with each plant producing approximately 500,000 seeds," explained Heideman.

He further went on to say, *"The West loses two- to four- and one-half million acre-feet of water*

per year from tamarisk, which is above and beyond native plant use."

Tamarisk chokes out native vegetation by consuming large quantities of water and accumulating high concentrations of salts in the surrounding soils.

Heideman discussed mechanical, chemical, and biological tamarisk control methods, with the focus being on the latest biological control method - the tamarisk leaf beetle (*Diorhabda elongata*).

The beetle is expected to enter Colorado in 2007; therefore, educating the public is crucial. The main public concern is if the beetle is host-specific or will it cause a pest invasion.

"Testing showed that the beetles are host-specific, so they will not take over surrounding vegetation," stated Heideman. The process requires the tamarisk to be defoliated over four or five flowering cycles.

Once controlled by the beetle, the brown remnant can be removed through mechanical or controlled burn methods and the area can be chemically treated to prevent potential re-growth.

By removing tamarisk from riparian corridors, water quantity and quality are improved and the health and diversity of native habitat are preserved.

In a study of the Pecos River, it was observed that there were more birds in 80 acres of cottonwoods and willows than in 400,000 acres of tamarisk.

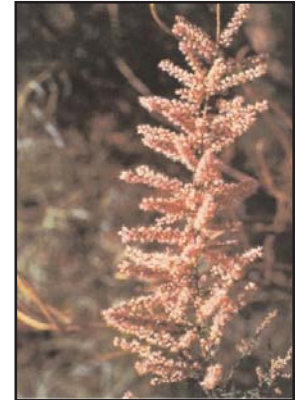
This was further exemplified on the State Wildlife Area Tour, led by Mike Zeman, Escalante

State Wildlife Area Manager. Zeman showed examples of where removal has led to instant improved habitat.

"We are seeing numerous animal footprints in places where the Tamarisk was so thick they were not able to even get to the river," Zeman said.

The meeting concluded with ideas of potential re-vegetation practices that are being developed by the Denver Botanical Gardens, in conjunction with government agencies and state universities.

Water is a key ingredient to the thirsty West and by controlling the foreign invader, tamarisk, we can provide more of this precious commodity to native vegetation, wildlife, and farmland.



Tamarisk chokes out native vegetation by consuming large quantities of water and accumulating high concentrations of salts in the surrounding soils.



A public information session was held to help landowners learn about the negative impacts of tamarisk and control methods for the species.



Attendees were shown examples of where removal of tamarisk has led to instant improved habitat.

San Luis Valley Solar Photovoltaic Center Pivot Corner Irrigation Project

The San Luis Valley (SLV) Solar Photovoltaic Center Pivot Corner Irrigation Project is grass-roots driven, as a Rio Grande County farmer thought it might help him lower the costs of energy for running his center pivot.

In October 2005, the farmer came to one of the **SLV Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council** members and asked him for help.

The member shared the story with the rest of the Council and the Council asked Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D Coordinator, to look into it.

As Jim started to study the situation he learned of the details of Colorado Amendment 37 and concluded that this would be a great time for learning and demonstrating solar photovoltaics.



This electric meter is capable of spinning forward when the farmer is drawing power and backward when producing power.

In early 2007, the guidelines for the NRCS Conservation Innovation (CIG) Grant Program became available and the Council determined that they were going to apply for a state grant.

The deadline was this past April and the RC&D Council staff worked feverishly to meet it.

In late June 2006, the Council was advised of their success with this grant.

The process continued in August when the Council participated in a facilitated action plan.

The action plan spelled out the actions that needed to be taken to prepare for the installation of the solar arrays in the spring of 2007.

The farm community was notified about the project in September 2006 and the participants were selected by October of the same year. Following this action, the Council did a bidding process for potential contractors.

In December 2006, Direct Power and Water of Albuquerque was selected to provide the equipment and the install.

The financial incentives went as follows:

- XCEL Energy offers \$4.50 per watt for a system under 10Kw. These systems are 10Kw, so the farmer receives \$45,000 from XCEL;

- Utilizing federal income tax liability, a farmer can receive up to 30 percent of the cost of the system, and that could go as high as \$25,500 (depending on the farmers tax situation);

- The CIG grant requires that the farmer be an EQIP cooperator. Five farmers are participating, so there will be approximately \$8,000 - \$9,000 going to each of them;

- The total system costs approximately \$85,000, so each farmer will pay about \$7,000 to \$8,000 for the system;

- The straight payback period excluding amortization is around four years.

This experience with solar is leading us into more diversified projects such as hydro, sustainability, and geothermal.

There is a lot to the process, but the RC&D Council feels that it is been very beneficial to our farmers, and to our globe, as it will lead to a reduction in CO2 into the atmosphere. The installations began in late June 2007.

For more information, call the San Luis Valley RC&D Council at (719) 589-3907, x124.

One to Grow



You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try.

~ Beverly Sills

Money isn't the most important thing in life, but it's reasonably close to oxygen on the "gotta have it" scale.

~ Zig Ziglar

Man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimensions.

~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

Life has a practice of living you, if you don't live it.

~ Philip Larkin

We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart.

~ Blaise Pascal

The worst bankrupt in the world is the person who has lost his enthusiasm.

~ H. W. Arnold

The trouble with being in the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat.

~ Lily Tomlin

Trust your dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.

~Kahlil Gibran

It is never too late to be what you might have been.

~ George Eliot

SECRC&D Coordinates Efforts for RBEG Rural Development Grant for Feasibility Study on On-Farm Ethanol Production

USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development (RD) Thomas Dorr was in Pueblo to present the Southeast Colorado Resource and Conservation Development (SECRC&D) Council with a check for \$50,000 to conduct a feasibility study to determine the viability of developing a new business to manufacture distillation equipment for "on-farm small scale" ethanol production.

The grant is through RD's Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) program. The study will be accomplished in two phases: Phase One involves investigating the feasibility and testing of a new ethanol distillation process.

If it is determined to be feasible for Southeastern Colorado, Matt Heimerich, a Crowley County Commissioner, said he hopes to get a pilot project working in Cheraw (Phase Two).

The long-term benefits for individual producers will be that both

small and large scale farms may take advantage of this process.

Joe Kost indicated that this is just one of several alternative energy projects for this area, but this project is aimed at six southeastern Colorado counties that are looking for alternative ways to make money.

Dorr stated, *"This is something I really get excited about, because we are really building a brand new energy source to help us diversify away from oil."*

He feels that his agency movement into the development of new technology will help the agency to be seen as a way to leverage other resources for changing the rural economy.

The RBEG program provides grants for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses to help fund distance learning networks and employment-related adult education programs.



Left to right Tim Macklin (SECRC&D Coordinator), Tom Dorr (Undersecretary for Rural Development), David Howard (Professional Ethanol), Matt Heimerich (SECRC&D Chairman), Doris Morgan (Rep. for Wayne Allard), Mike Bennett (CO Rural Development Director), Joe Kost (Manager, Canon City Rural Development).

Backyard Conservation Day Camp

The first Backyard Conservation Day Camp began Monday June 11th at Homesteader's Park in Holyoke. This free camp, sponsored by the Haxtun Conservation District, was held each morning throughout the week. Campers were involved in activities that encompassed the Aldo Leopold method of striving for a land ethic to instill a love, a respect, and an admiration for the land.

Campers began the week with an introduction to the Aldo Leopold Education Project given by forester Jerry Miller. Each student received a copy of the "Sand County Almanac" and a journal to record their observations.

Conservation Game Officer Jack Wieland discussed the methods and benefits of composting. The campers started a compost pile that will later be moved to Holyoke's Community Garden. They then took a trip to the Holyoke recycling center, where they picked out materials to build a bird feeder that they could take home.

Tuesday was dedicated to Wildlife and the campers used their Animal Tracks pocket guide to help them determine what animals were present and the possible scenario that took place on the "sheet story."

Next was the activity "Oh Deer" and the campers each represented deer or a vital part of their habitat, water, food, or shelter. The students learned just how much the deer population can fluctuate when there are not enough resources available and with the introduction of predators such as the wolf.

Wednesday and Thursday the campers spent their mornings learning about plant identification and the benefits of xeriscape. Linda L'Angelo, horticulturalist, explained some of the plant uses and proper planting techniques.

Each student also decorated their own stepping stone and built two Aldo Leopold benches for the xeriscape garden. Jerry Miller shared the "Cottonwood Stars" story and showed the campers that in every cottonwood branch you can find your star.

On the final day of camp, the students participated in a GPS Obstacle Course. They used handheld GPS units to find points where clues were strategically hidden amongst nature's elements. At the end of the camp everyone received a certificate of achievement and enjoyed a BBQ.



Campers hold the bird feeders they built (above) and started a compost pile (left) that will later be moved to Holyoke's Community Garden.



Kids enjoy placing their decorated stepping stones (top) and building Aldo Leopold benches (left) to be placed in the xeriscape garden.



on the pulse

State Office News



Debbie Kanatzar,

Secretary to the State Conservationist, attended an NRCS Administrative Assistant Training held at National Headquarters (NHQ) in Washington, D.C. from July 18-19.

This was an opportunity for the Assistants to the State Conservationist from around the United States to meet, network, and spend time with specific disciplines at NHQ.

Chief Arlen Lancaster stopped by to welcome the Assistants and a group photo was taken with Secretary Mike Johanns.

The Assistants listened to presentations, shared timesaving tips, asked questions, and toured

Department of Agriculture buildings.

The last training session of this nature was held in 1990.

The Colorado Natural

Resources Conservation Service has recently funded 10 Conservation Innovation Grants proposals totaling approximately \$618,000.

"These grants will be funded to develop and refine cutting-edge conservation technologies and approaches to help producers maintain viable agricultural operations," said Randy Randall, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, Lakewood, CO.



The 10 approved projects address traditional natural resource issues

concerning agriculture such as water quantity, grazing lands and forest health, and soil resource management, as well as emerging natural resource issues including energy conservation.

Additional information about CIG, including summaries of approved projects, is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>.



Congratulations to

Sandy Green, Secretary to the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations and Principal Staff, on her recent marriage to Chris Doran.

Sandy and Chris were married on July 6, 2007, in

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the chapel at Heritage Square, Morrison, CO. They had been together for two years prior to making it official.

Sandy and Chris met through a mutual acquaintance at a birthday party. Chris has two children, Breanna (6) and Christopher (5), and Sandy has her hands full.

The State Office

recently held a State Conservationist's (STC) Advisory Committee meeting for the snow survey program. The committee consists of the STCs in Colorado, Utah, and Montana.

The meeting was intended for Mike Strobel, the new Director of the Water and Climate Center, to get to know the Colorado snow survey staff and Allen Green. The agenda centered on how to meet the program's and customer's needs with existing funding.

Julie Nelson, State Economist, Utah, gave a presentation on snow survey and water supply forecasting economic analysis. There were also discussions about how to sell the snow survey program to those who can help improve our budget outlook, including a legislative tour in Salt Lake next winter. Other topics

covered were safety needs and a continuing web presence as the future changes in this delivery occur.



Allen Green (Colorado STC), Mike Gillespie (Snow Survey Supervisor), Larry Clark (Deputy Chief for Science and Technology), Sara Schmidt (Regional Assistance Chief), Sylvia Gillen (STC for Utah), and other staff from the Weather and Climate Center and NHQ were in attendance at this meeting.



Colorado NRCS Job Vacancies

Soil Conservation Technician

GS-0458-4/5/6

2 vacancies (Trinidad and Las Animas)

Closes: 8/22/07

Contact: Henry Jackson
720-544-2825

Voucher Examiner

GS-540-5/6

Located in State Office - Lakewood

Closes: 9/8/07

Contact: Henry Jackson
720-544-2825

Combined Federal Campaign



Your 2007 Chairs for CFC are:

Katherine Burse-Johnson, Chair

Tim Carney, Co-Chair

Stay tuned for more information.

Donna Rasmussen,

Contract Specialist with the State Office will be detailed to the ITC Center in Ft. Collins for the next three months.

She will be assisting with the rollout of the new web-based easement tool kit program. She began her detail on August 6th and is scheduled to return on November 15th.

The new tool kit program will be used to track and monitor all of the easement programs (WRP, EWP-FE, EWRP, GRP, WREP, HFRP, and FRPP).

Donna is currently reviewing every state's databases and noting discrepancies in the data. Errors or findings will then be relayed back to the states on what must be corrected prior to migration of the data.

She will also be assisting the states with any questions they have on the current data once it is rolled out for data cleanup.

on the pulse

Area Office News

Area One

Bookcliff, Mount Sopris, and South Side Conservation Districts co-hosted the Summer Agriculture Institute—Food, Fiber, and More, in Rifle.

Teachers from all over the state participated in a week-long workshop to learn how to integrate agriculture into the class curriculum.

The week included tours of local ranches and agriculture businesses, a bee farm, a wildlife refuge, and a gas development location.

One of the highlights of the week was the BBQ with a panel discussion with local ranchers, county commissioner, gas company representatives, and teachers.

We were honored by several multi-generational ranch families attending and telling their stories.

On Thursday the teachers “worked” a day on the

ranch with many of the host families that offered housing for the teachers during the week.

This is a rewarding workshop for teachers, staff, partners, and our producers.

Thanks to all that helped make this a success!



Lightning started the Canyon Creek Fire on June 17, which quickly spread due to high winds. The fire burned approximately 1,200 acres in four days.

The Bookcliff Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Bureau of Land Management has assessed the potential damage to homes and property.



NRCS engineers have designed structures that will help to protect homes on Canyon Creek through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

The purpose of the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program is to undertake emergency measures for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention to safeguard lives and property from floods and debris flow caused by rainfall after a fire.

Homeowners can take a number of steps to protect their property and ensure that they do not assist in the spread of wildland fires. This includes clearing excess fuel, creating defensible space around their homes, and using FireWise practices.

Area Two

Jesse Calkins is the newest hire at the Franktown Field Office.

Jesse, 19, hails from Bloomsburg Pennsylvania and has recently finished his freshman year at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa.

He is currently studying for a B.S. degree in Civil/Environmental Engineering with a minor in Mathematics.

Jesse is spending the summer in Colorado under NRCS's Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).



While under this program he will work with the staff at the Franktown office, gain valuable knowledge in his field of study, and hopefully get a head start on his career.

Jesse has always had a huge interest in wildlife and the environment and said that this opportunity is a great way for him to expand

his interests into a worthwhile career.

On May 24, 2007, the Yuma County Conservation District held a Workshop titled "Back to the River."

The day-long workshop focused on the Republican River with water quantity concerns, aquatic habitat, and managing brush and Russian Olives and other habitat along the river.

Thirty local landowners attended the workshop.

Lana Armon is a **SCEP** (Student Career Experience Program) student from the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff.

Lana is a senior where she majors in Regulatory Science with the option of Environmental Biology.

She started with NRCS in May of 2006 and spent last summer through December working in the Colorado Springs Field Office.

Lana will graduate this December and is hoping for a permanent position in Colorado.



Debbie Clairmont is a graduating USDA/NRCS Tribal Scholar student from Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana.

She graduated with a degree in Environmental Science Restoration Ecology. She was top scholar in the nation and has a promising future with NRCS.

Debbie grew up in Florida, a descendant of the Muscogee Creek and French Canadian Cree Tribes from Georgia. Her Aunt told her she was related to John Muir who started the Sierra Club and convinced Theodore Roosevelt to start Yosemite National Park.

With such a rich heritage in land conservation, it is only fitting that she work for an agency whose motto is Helping People Help the Land.

Congratulations to Kindra Brandner, DC in Yuma for being selected to serve on the Strategic Planning Accountability (SPA) Deputy Area Advisory Board.

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area news cont.

Also, **Tiffany Harvey** is the new Area 2 representative for the Civil Rights committee.

On Saturday, June 16th, Steven Calkum, Soil Conservationist in Burlington FO, gave an informal tour/presentation on windbreak planning and installation to the Star Chaser Chapter of the Colorado Family Campers and RVers.

The tour included two immature field windbreaks and concluded with a mature windbreak at the Burlington airport.

Topics of discussion included species selection, weed control, and windbreak survival and planning for successful windbreaks. Steve handed out brochures on field and farmstead windbreak planning and function at the beginning of the tour.

On Friday July 20, 2007 a workshop was held for the local Range Riders in Sterling, Colorado.

Rich Mullany from Northeast Colorado RC&D and **Laura Knapp** from NRCS hosted the workshop and visited various areas in Logan and Washington counties.

Some of the subjects

that were discussed included: riparian river areas, recognizing different plant types, knowing the different crops in North East Colorado, and different types of irrigation systems.

Ways of conserving the land were discussed, which had to do with irrigation and helping to preserve wetlands.

The end of the day, the students came up with different designs for a particular pasture for the best rangeland management practices.

Val Loose, District Manager for the Morgan Conservation District, has been working with area students on good conservation practices this past month.

She started each talk off with the students going to the barn to feed the cows in a "black blizzard." This feat was accomplished by stringing out a rope and the students holding on to it and walking with their eyes shut.



Loose presented each student with a Rocky Mountain Juniper, Ponderosa Pine, and Native

Plum tree, all provided by the Morgan Conservation District.

Over a one-month period, Loose talked to a total of 573 students from various schools in Fort Morgan and Brush about windbreaks, living snow fences, wildlife habitat, soil erosion control, and beautification.



On June 21, a Range Field Day workshop was held in Wray.

Over 70 landowners attended the workshop to learn about grass growth rates, when to move cattle, and how to tell if your grasses are recovering from the drought.

The workshop was sponsored by the Yuma County Conservation District with internal and external speakers.

Congratulations to Ta Trecia Wesley on accepting a position with the Ohio NRCS as a Natural Resource Program Specialist.

Ta Trecia has been a part of Colorado NRCS Greeley FO for seven years and will be sorely missed!

Area Three

The Northeast Prowers

Conservation District, Southeast Colorado RC&D, and USDA-NRCS sponsored a Small Scale Wind Energy Workshop recently. Topics included cost-benefit analyses using today's prices, a feasibility study, and funding sources and availability.

The Baca County

Conservation District, local STAR Bootstraps, and USDA-NRCS sponsored a Fencing Clinic. New technology that makes high-tensile electric fencing faster and cheaper to install, easier to maintain, and more resistant to storm damage were discussed.

Greg Langer, Colorado

Springs, continues to help Fort Carson with its work on a historical center. He provides guidance on grasses for planting and trees for the center.

Area 3 hosted two

Argentinean range specialists and **Herman Garcia**, State Range Conservationist, August 1-3. **Mary Miller**, **David Miller**, **Rich Rhoades**, and **Kimberly Diller** took them to various ranches to see rotational grazing systems, wildlife projects, and

formerly irrigated cropland that has been revegetated and is now used for grazing cattle.



Cheyenne Wells Field

Office has been busy with the MIL vehicle. The field office staff has measured 25 wells on approximately 3,000 acres for 15 producers.

Primary tests performed are gallons per minute being pumped, chlorophyll readings, water salinity, water pH test, and temperature readings in irrigated corn fields.

We have installed water-mark sensors and data logger on a center pivot with alfalfa planted on it.

This will log sensor readings three times a day and the data will be downloaded at the end of the season to graph the results.

These tests will assist a producer in evaluating his or her irrigation system. With energy costs and the high value of the crops, we are trying to fine tune the irrigation system in order to get the most efficient utilization of our ground water resources.

Despite the nearly 100

degree forecast, over 75 people attended the Ranchers Field Day on June 21, 2007.

The event was hosted by the Yuma County Conservation District and the Wray Field Office.

Ben Berlinger, **Herman Garcia**, and **Josh Saunders** lead the breakout sessions on Sandy, Loamy, and Sands sites respectively.

Tim Steffens,

Rangeland Management Specialist, Springfield Field Office, led the cattle size and forage requirements breakout session. Plant identification, grazing management, soil and plant relationships, and plant response to grazing are just some of the topics that were highlighted that day.

The Field Day was held on the Nebraska/Colorado state line on Rex and Jody Buck's ranch.

Participants traveled an average of 80 miles one way to attend the field day. One participant even traveled 220 miles one way to attend.



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The Teller-Park

Conservation District and NRCS office staff supported Camp Rocky during the week of July 8-14th.

Conservation District President Vern Vinson demonstrated the District's River and Riparian Trailer, and he and Pat Galvin attended several sessions to learn about other educational resource tools that are available, such as the Groundwater Model and the Snow Survey Table Top display.

Leon Kot, District Conservationist, Woodland Park Field Office, assisted with the Soil and Water Conservation group instruction along with **Beth Fortman**, Soil Conservationist from Pueblo FO and Julie Kallenberger of the West Greely CD, which sponsored her attendance to the Camp.

Janet Tanski, Soil Conservation Technician Aid at Woodland Park, assisted **Ben Berlinger**, Area Rangeland Management Specialist, La Junta Area Office, and **Dan Nosal**, Resource Management Specialist, Franktown Field Office.



District Conservationist

Rick Romano, Canon City Field Office, made a presentation on riparian revegetation at an invasive weed management tour sponsored by Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) partners on June 2.

The tour featured invasive weed management efforts by the USDA Forest Service on the Mason Gulch Burn area in Custer County and salt cedar management carried out by CWMA partners in Fremont County.

Fremont Conservation District Manager Janet Barnhart coordinated registration for the tour attended by about 40 people.

Major construction of a t-ball and softball field at the Genoa- Hugo School was completed this past July.

The project is designed to incorporate several water saving measures in addition to being low maintenance.

A subsurface drip irrigation system was installed to provide significant water savings over conventional sprinklers.

The system is also low maintenance as there are no above ground components to wear out or be damaged.

The field can even be watered while games are being played. Typical ball fields use cool season grasses such as fescue or bluegrass.

These grasses require a lot of water during the summer months. Buffalo grass, a native warm season grass, was planted to provide a drought tolerant, low maintenance turf.



Its low growing characteristics and low water requirements provide for minimal upkeep after the ball seasons are over.

During the seasons, only an occasional mowing is necessary to "clean up" its appearance. Funding and partners for the project were provided through a GOCO grant, Genoa-Hugo School District, the Town of Hugo, East Central Colorado RC&D and private donations.



Area Four

The Durango Soil

Survey Office has installed a piezometer to measure the depth and duration of the water table in one soil on a river terrace.

The question had come up as to whether the soil had a water table within the rooting zone of plants at certain times of the year.

A water table would affect the classification of the soil. It would also benefit some plants and help to determine the ecological site.

To help answer this question, a piezometer was placed in the soil. This is actually a one-inch PVC pipe with holes drilled in it to allow water to move freely into the pipe. This was placed into the soil to a depth of 72 inches, as deep as we could get.

Now during the spring snowmelt and rainy seasons when the river is likely to be high, the depth to the water table can be determined by running a tape measure down the pipe.



Sterling Moss,

Resource Conservationist in Ignacio, gave a presentation on the importance of soil and the prevention of soil erosion to approximately 120 students during Project Wild Day, which was hosted by the Ignacio Intermediate School.

The discussion included stories and pictures from the dust bowl era; the role of healthy soil for food production; practices to prevent soil erosion; and, of course, the difference between soil and dirt.

The students were able to get dirty by examining the soil profile near their school. They also tried to make some soil at the end of each class. They learned it's much easier to conserve soil than trying to create it!

Several government agencies and businesses, including the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Southern Ute Wildlife Division, Bureau of Indian Affairs Fire Management, and others gave presentations on a variety of natural resource issues.

The Pagosa Springs

Field Office, along with representatives from the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, and Colorado State University Extension, partici-

pated in the San Juan Conservation District's 18th annual 6th grade conservation tour hosted by the Rafter T ranch.



The 6th graders were given presentations on wildlife management, soil formation and erosion, forest management, river processes, and archeology.

All the presentations were very interactive, allowing the kids to touch, see, and even taste aspects of the presentations.

During the soil presentation students were able to make their own edible soil, complete with gummy worms.



The wildlife activity showed the kids how animals are tracked with radio collars; and during the river processes demonstration, they could see how rivers work by watching the flowing miniature river in the riparian trailer.

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They could then turn and see many of the same features in the Piedra River as it flowed by. The forest management presentation walked the kids through a forested site and discussed different aspects of forest health.

They were then shown how to properly plant a seedling tree. Each of the 120 6th graders that attended the tour received their own Ponderosa Pine seedling to take home and plant at the end of the day.



The Rio Grande

Conservation District and Monte Vista Field Office recently held a grazing management field day for local livestock producers.

Guest speaker George Whitten described the high intensity, short duration grazing system that he uses on his allotment near Saguache, CO.

Mr. Whitten monitors the forage on his allotment continuously and moves the livestock as it is depleted, using a low stress herding technique.

Basically, once cattle are placed on his grazing permit they are trained to

move on cues. Often, water has to be hauled in to the allotment and moved with the cows to maximize forage utilization.

Whitten believes that this type of grazing system is good for the rangeland because the forage reacts better to intense periods of grazing followed by the right amount of rest.

Traditional grazing techniques are generally moderate in their intensity and occur over a long period of time, which allows plants to become less productive.

He summarized, *"We need to use animal impact on the rangeland positively. When we think of animal impact, we generally think of it in negative terms. But it can be a very powerful tool."*



Cindy Villa, Multi-County Range Conservationist in Alamosa, CO, discussed the Grazing Response Index for evaluating annual grazing impacts.

She emphasized that monitoring should take place over a period of years to assess the long term trend rather than short term grazing or climatic effects. She agreed with the

concepts that George Whitten presented and added that hoof impact on the land is good because it breaks up the soil and allows moisture to infiltrate better.

She said, *"Grazing management is an interrelationship between the soil, the animals, and the plants. If the cows aren't having much impact, the other elements are affected."*



On June 15, 2007, Soil Conservationist, **Ken Davis** and District Conservationist, **Cindy Crist**, Monte Vista Field Office, sponsored the "Bug Booth" at the annual Children's Water Festival held at Cole Park in Alamosa, CO, where nearly 150 students attended.

Macroinvertebrate samples were collected from the Rio Grande River and used to show festival participants the different types of insects found in high gradient cold water.

Students were provided forceps, magnifying glasses, and macroinvertebrate keys to identify the various insects.

El Paso County Conservation District Receives First Annual Southwest Region Collaborative Conservation Award

by Shelli Mader
District Manager, EPCCD

For their efforts to improve their community, the El Paso County Conservation District received the first annual National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Southwest Region Collaborative Conservation Award.

The district's major projects: a tree memorial at Fort Carson Army Base, the Fountain Creek Watershed Project, a small acreage landowner calendar, and a review of environmental impacts of dams within their watershed earned the district the top honors.

Robert Cordova, Secretary/Treasurer for the District, represented the group at the National NACD meeting on February 7 in Los Angeles to receive the honor. The district received a certificate signed by the NACD President and the NACD region Chair.

"El Paso County Conservation District won the award for their region for their outstanding community and collabora-

tive conservation projects which have had a significant positive impact on the community resource base," said Beth Mason, NACD Administrative Assistant for the North Central region.

The El Paso County Conservation District partnered with multiple agencies and organizations including NRCS, CACD, and the Fort Carson Army Base in Colorado to provide several of their community-enhancement projects. Many of the district's innovative projects, especially the Fort Carson Memorial Project, are the creation of the district's president John Bradshaw.

Bradshaw, a retired Air Force officer, wanted to find a way to pay tribute to the men and women who fight in the war against terrorism.

"It is difficult to find a way to honor these men and women who make so many sacrifices," Bradshaw said. *"A tree is a lasting reminder and a fitting way for our conservation district and others to give a small thank you. If everyone does a little bit, it will help make the nation stronger. This is our little bit."*

The District's Fort Carson Tree Memorial Project is in the final planning stages. The district has worked with the base, CACD, and Colorado conservation districts to plan a tree grove memorial near the base's future historical center.

The memorial is designed to house 77 trees – one for each conservation district in Colorado. EPCCD is currently solicit-

ing donations for the memorial from conservation districts and is gearing up to start planting trees this fall.

The district also designed and printed a calendar filled with information to help the growing number of small acreage landowners in the Colorado Springs area.

The Fountain Creek Watershed project and the dam inspections are part of the district's efforts to reduce the negative environmental impacts of El Paso County's explosive growth.

"I am really proud of what this group has accomplished," board member Robert Cordova said. *"We have received positive feedback on the work that we have been doing and plan on continuing these projects."*

The NACD developed the collaborative conservation award at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation last year.

"There were a number of innovative and forward-thinking collaborative conservation projects showcased there that were worthy of national recognition," Mason said. *"In the interest of providing continued recognition to conservation leaders at the local and regional level, NACD decided to partner with NRCS, NCDEA, NASCA, and NARC&DC to present the Collaborative Conservation Award. We have decided to make it an annual competition."*

All conservation districts are eligible for the collaborative conservation award. For more information, visit <http://www.nacd-net.org/outreach/awards/> to read the award description and download the nomination form.



El Paso County Conservation District board members receive the first annual National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Southwest Region Collaborative Conservation Award.



Techno Tips

A Conservation Innovation Grant Project: Employing GIS Technology to Target Salinity and Selenium Affected Areas

by Alisa Mazzocchi, Delta Conservation District GIS Technician

The Delta Conservation District is one of six salinity control districts in Colorado. This ranking is a result of the extensive Mancos Shale soil environment that underlies the agricultural community of the district.

Due to this geological presence, a major component of the districts' duties is assisting agriculturalists in the development of a salinity control plan. The project of interest was designed to employ GIS technology to target salinity and selenium affected areas that are being irrigated without a salinity control plan.

At the base of the salinity control plan is a GIS project illustrating the applied water conservation practices. This project is created using the NRCS Customer Service Toolkit Program.

The GIS based program served as the template for the CIG project. The use of the Toolkit program was beneficial as it provided a GIS standard procedure that has been adopted by the NRCS and could be easily communicated amongst the staff.

A caveat in the use of the Toolkit program was immediately recognized. The Toolkit program operates on a contract-by-contract basis. To strategically focus and target future salinity control plans it is more efficient to view the location of all water conservation practices in one map setting.

To overcome the unforeseen limitation, it was determined that the water conservation practice data would need to be compiled into a single viewing environment.

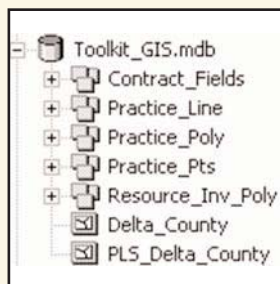


Figure 1: The design of the personal geodatabase (Toolkit_GIS.mdb) and the feature datasets (Contract_Fields, Practice_Line, Practice_Poly, Practice_Pts and Resource_Inv_Poly).

Such an environment was provided though the design of a personal geodatabase in ArcCatalog.

With 475 contracts and each contract having various data layers, feature datasets were deemed necessary to organize the plethora of data (Figure 1).

Each feature dataset was designed to house the compatible layer from each contract.

To accommodate the data compilation two extra steps were necessary. First, the "Export Data" capability was utilized to export each

water conservation practice geometry type from the contract in Toolkit to the corresponding feature dataset (Figure 2a).



Figure 2: a) The "Export Data" capability was utilized in Toolkit by right clicking on the layer of interest and navigating to the options as illustrated. b) The "Load Data Wizard" was utilized in ArcCatalog by right clicking on the layer you wish to add the additional data to and then navigating to the option as illustrated.

Second, the "Load Data Wizard" in ArcCatalog was utilized to combine the 475 layers for each geometry type into one layer (Figure 2b).

The data compilation of water conservation practices provides a portion of the overall picture regarding where future salinity control plans should be focused. To get the complete visualization the practice data was analyzed against the statewide irrigated lands layer and the selenium soil concentration layer (Figure 3).

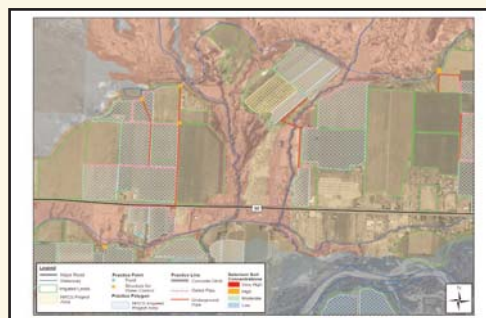


Figure 3: Agricultural land with a salinity control plan (blue cross hatch) in relation to irrigated land without a salinity control plan (green outline) and selenium soil concentrations.

This project exemplifies the benefits and applications that GIS can provide. The product has proven to be beneficial to the NRCS and Delta Conservation District staff. A growing interest in this project stemmed the creation of a user manual. If you are interested in this project contact the Delta Conservation District at (970) 874-5726.

LOOKS CAN KILL!**Canada Thistle**
(Cirsium Arvense)**- Control Methods -**

This weed has a very extensive root system, which means it can recover from most control methods.

It is one of the most widespread and economically damaging noxious weeds in Colorado.

Repetitive mowing and herbicide applications will control this plant, so persistence pays off.

There are no known effective biological controls for this plant.

Mechanical

Mowing should begin in May and be repeated every 14-21 days until frost. Digging, pulling or cultivating should begin in April and repeated every 14-21 days until frost.

Cultural

Sensitive areas, 2 lbs. 2,4-D per acre (spring and fall) Non-sensitive areas, 1 qt. Tordon 22k, or 2 qt. Banvel per acre (spring or fall)

Chemical

Alfalfa and Western Wheatgrass compete very well.

Ditch Lining Demonstration in Coaldale

By Rick Romano
Franktown Field Office

On July 11 Fremont Conservation District hosted a demonstration day to provide landowners, NRCS engineers, and engineering technicians the opportunity to view a SmartDitch installation and application.

SmartDitch is a high-density polyethylene (HDPE) channel/ditch-lining system that's ideal for drainage, erosion/sediment control, land development, irrigation/ agriculture and other water conveyance applications.

The demo took place at C.B. Ranch in Coaldale Colorado, where local landowner Clint Base along with Joe Kaul of Kaul Construction showed how they used SmartDitch to line an existing earth ditch. In addition to the water savings due to reduced seepage loss, erosion in the ditch was eliminated with the SmartDitch product.

Also giving technical data about the application was NRCS engineer



Landowners, NRCS engineers, and engineering technicians view a SmartDitch installation.

Howard Clyma, who along with Rob Fontaine, Civil Engineering Technician from the Canon City Field Office, provided technical assistance for the installation of the SmartDitch at C.B. Ranch. This product was actually installed in October of 2006.

SmartDitch is available in several configurations to meet various water and size requirements. It is thought that SmartDitch could be a viable alternative to underground pipelines and concrete ditch lining where access and depth of cover is limited.

Monte Vista NRCS Featured in Documentary

The Monte Vista Field Office will be featured in a documentary by the "Friends of the Bosque."

Alexis Rykken of the "Mapping the Rio Watershed Education Project" and Mike Gibson of the "Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project" (RGHRP) recently toured the stream bank stabilization projects that have been completed by the NRCS.

The projects are a combined effort with the USDA-NRCS, Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project, The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the EPA 319 Non-Point Source Program.

The project area includes a 10-mile stretch of river between Del Norte and South Fork.

The emphasis of this project was to improve the natural stability of the stream bank and improve the riparian habitat.

There have been 18 individuals who signed up with the NRCS and RGHRP to complete projects along this stretch of river, and to date 10 projects have been completed.

The remaining projects will be completed this fall.

The documentary will air on PBS in the next several months.

What's New with Earth Team?



Helping People Help the Land

**Student
Volunteers
Can
Make
a World
of
Difference!**

www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/volunteers

The Earth Team offers outstanding and exciting opportunities for students who need professional work experience or academic credit.

As an Earth Team volunteer students can develop leadership and job skills, gain volunteer experience to highlight on college applications and resumes, and work with their peers to help conserve and protect resources in their community.

Brochures can be ordered by contacting 1-888-LANDCARE.

Springfield, Lamar hold Carbon Credit Meetings

*Submitted by Misty George
District Manager
Baca County Conservation District*

Thanks to area conservation districts, Southeast Colorado agriculture producers had the opportunity to learn more about Rocky Mountain Farmers Union's Carbon Credit Program.

Baca County, Branson-Trinchera and Northeast Prowers Conservation Districts hosted the events.

Both meetings were well attended, with 43 in Springfield and 23 in Lamar. The possibility of receiving additional income for sequestering carbon has generated a lot of interest among area

farmers and ranchers.

Agricultural producers may be paid for conservation practices they are already doing that capture and store carbon in the soil.

Tony Frank from Rocky Mountain Farmers Union detailed the five categories producers can enroll in: conservation tillage, long term grass seeding, rangeland management, forestry, and methane offset.

Producers asked great questions at both meetings. The information exchange and dialog that followed helped everyone understand the benefits and risks involved.

The sign-up deadline is August 15th on most categories. Detailed information can be found at www.nfu.org.

Thank you to the event sponsors: Conservation Districts (Baca County, Branson-Trinchera, and Northeast Prowers), Southeast Colorado RC&D, Orebaugh Insurance, Hoffman Insurance, and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.



The Springfield crowd listens intently as Tony Frank explains the paperwork necessary to enroll in Rocky Mountain Farmers Union's Carbon Credit Program.



What is Travis McKay Holding??

Travis McKay, Soil Conservation Technician, Akron Field Office, is pictured holding a Bush Morning Glory that has a root about 4.5 feet tall and a 1-foot diameter at the top.

Travis and Al Albin, Geologist, Rocky Mountain Engineering Team, discovered the plant at a feed lot located about 15 miles north of Akron. It is now on display at the Akron Field Office, 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., 5 days a week.

Admission is free and open to the public.

Slice of Fountain Creek ranchland saved

Conservation easement will shelter part of the Frost Ranch from the march of development on all sides.

Reprinted with permission from *The Pueblo Chieftain*

by CHRIS WOODKA

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

A ranch that's lying at ground zero for Fountain Creek development will always retain a piece of agricultural tradition thanks to a conservation easement dedicated last week.

"Fountain is coming south and now, with the McCulloch Ranch, Pueblo is coming north. With the conservation easement, nobody gets to build on it," said Ferris Frost on Friday, shortly before a dedication of a conservation easement on the Frost Ranch.



Ferris Frost

Located about 20 miles north of Pueblo and east of Fountain Creek across from the former Pikes Peak International Raceway, the Frost Ranch sits in the middle of a web of development.

Within a 3-mile radius, plans are progressing for two wastewater treatment plants, a power plant and a gravel pit, not to mention the steady march of residential and commercial development from both

directions.

The conservation easement is sponsored by Colorado Open Lands as part of its Peak to Prairie initiative with the Nature Conservancy, partially funded through a Great Outdoors Colorado grant.

"This is strategic for the future, as well as tying some of the water to the land," said Jay Frost, Ferris' brother, and the operator of the ranch.

The Frost family is dedicating the conservation easement to their father, Jon W. Frost II, who began ranching on Fountain Creek in El Paso County in 1958, and Kirk Hanna, an older brother who died in 1998.

The elder Frost married Mary Hanna, a daughter of the family that owned the adjoining ranch, merging two families with a total of nine children. Today, Jay's two sons, Sam and Will, spend half of their time with him at the ranch.

"It was Kirk's idea, even before we started talking to Colorado Open Lands, to create a swath of land from Chico Creek to the Fountain," Ferris said. *"We're doing this to protect the land and the community. We're experiencing significant pressure from development."*

Jay, 46, and the baby of the Frost-Hanna clan, has found as he's worked the land he's become a firm believer in conservation.

"You find out the environment is more important than the agricultural parts," Jay said. *"Those ripari-*



Jay Frost, operator of the Frost Ranch, talks about his family's decision to dedicate a conservation easement that forever will protect a critical river bank area from development.

an areas, the swampy areas, are important to the quality of the water. That was part of our decision to do the easement. We were committed anyway."

While it was easy to decide, the process itself was somewhat arduous.

"Was it stressful? We were making major, life-changing decisions every single week," Ferris said.

The Frosts set aside 915 acres, including 350 irrigated acres, in the part of the 5,400-acre ranch that lies in the bottomlands near the confluence of Williams Creek with the Fountain. Frost also leases 18,000 acres of federal land in his cattle operation.

The easement will maintain the property as a working ranch, allowing for some future changes.

One of those could be a trail along Fountain Creek, planned by Colorado State Parks.

NRCS Employee Spot Light

more than meets the eye



When a Mother's Love is not Enough...Living with a Teen on Drugs

We all have dreams for our children to grow up and become the best that they can be in this world. Never would we expect them to turn to a world of drugs as a means of becoming the best that they can be.

Unfortunately, the latter was the case with Debbie White Kanatzar's oldest son, Tim. Not only had he turned to drugs to suppress the early physical and mental childhood abuse he suffered from his father, Tim did the unimaginable—something that would change Debbie and her family's lives forever.

It all began on the evening of March 1, 1997, in Lee's Summit, Missouri. Debbie, a mother of three, was preparing dinner in the kitchen when her son Tim, then age 21, approached her and asked her if she could buy cigarettes for him. Debbie said "no," so Tim asked his sister, Jennifer, then 18, and she also said "no."

Tim had managed to find enough money to purchase the cigarettes but wanted a ride to the store. He then asked his mother and sister to take him to the store and they both refused.

Furious at both his mother and his sister, Tim, who had been on methamphetamine since the age of 14, began yelling and knocking over furniture in the kitchen. Debbie asked Tim to leave, but he refused. Debbie then called 911 and requested that a police officer be sent to her home to remove her son because of his violent nature.

Hearing this, Tim disappeared to his room and returned to the kitchen with a gun in his hand. Jennifer screamed to her mom, "Mom, Tim has a gun!"

Debbie turned to look at Tim and the gun he had pointing directly at her.

Initially, she was not afraid because she thought he was just trying to scare her. On the contrary, Tim pulled the trigger, shooting Debbie with a force that sent her to the kitchen floor to a pool of blood that surged from her left cheek.

Jennifer called 911 again, but little did she know that she would be Tim's next victim. He shot Jennifer in the right breast and the bullet lodged into her ribs. Despite being shot, Jennifer began to help her mother.

The paramedics finally arrived and both mother and daughter were transported to the hospital where Jennifer was treated and released and where Debbie would spend the next five days in the Intensive Care Unit and an overall nine days in the hospital suffering from a broken left jaw and a severed Carotid Artery.

Debbie lost four pints of blood that day and was actually considered "dead" for a few minutes before doctors saved her life. She suffered from memory problems and now has problems with her eyes, swallowing, tasting, talking, and feeling in her left shoulder.

Three years following the surgery, Debbie has had 13 surgical procedures done to her neck and throat to assist her with swallowing, breathing, and increasing sound from her voice box. She is expected to have swallowing and aspirating problems for the rest of her life, but she is thankful to be alive.

Immediately following the shooting, police began their search for Tim who, in a get-away attempt, had taken Debbie's car keys and stolen her car. He was found within an hour after the shooting 20 miles outside of Lee's Summit in Debbie's car with the gun in the glove compartment.



Debbie White Kanatzar
pictured with son, Tim.

Tim was arrested and sentenced to a maximum of 10 years in prison, eight and one-half of which he served before being released. He was released on September 2005 and is now 32 years old.

Although Debbie initially had a hard time coming to grips with what her son had done, she has since forgiven him, and they currently share a very close relationship. Debbie realizes that it was the drugs that possessed his body and caused him to commit the heinous crime against her and her daughter.

As a result, Debbie's mission today is to educate other children and their parents about drug abuse. She says that it doesn't matter if your child comes from a rich or poor upbringing, drugs can affect anyone.

"It all depends on the types of peers or friends your child hangs around," Debbie said. *"It has nothing to do with social status....drugs can affect anybody."*

Within three months after her tragedy, Debbie began speaking at various engagements about her personal situation and drug abuse.

Pollutant Trading Reduces Nonpoint Source Pollution in Colorado

By Russell N. Clayshulte

Pollutant trading programs are incorporated into four watershed plans in Colorado and will be used in many other watersheds in the near future.

These trading programs are power tools to help manage nonpoint source loads for specific water quality parameters.

They also provide flexibility in maintaining point-source wasteload allocations to protect the beneficial uses of Colorado's waters.

Trading programs establish guidelines and provide economic or development incentives to entities that reduce nonpoint source loads in a watershed in exchange for a point source credit.

The watershed benefits with a net reduction in pollutant loading of

the target water quality parameter(s).

Generally, trading between source types (point and nonpoint) is for a single pollutant (e.g., total phosphorus); however the future of Colorado trading programs will include "off-set parameter trades" (e.g., reduce mercury and get phosphorus credit).

Trading is a watershed management tool that promotes good land stewardship. For example, the Chatfield Reservoir Control Regulation (State Regulation #73) establishes trading provisions for point-to-nonpoint source trades.

These provisions simplify and expand options for point source dischargers to acquire additional wasteload allocations for their wastewater treatment facilities.

Trades encourage alternative and creative treatment arrangements for phosphorus concentration reductions. The trading program goal is to allow trades that have a measurable net water quality benefit in the watershed.

The Chatfield Watershed Authority current trading program focuses on total phosphorus and uses a 2:1 trade ratio for nonpoint source to point source trades.

In other words, the reduction of two pounds of nonpoint source total phosphorus results in one pound of point source credit.

Trade reductions are implemented through the use of permanent and long-term best management practices designed

especially for water quality improvements.

The Authority and trade credit recipients carefully monitor water quality and provide assurances that trade projects are meeting expectations for pollutant reduction.

The Chatfield Watershed has a total maximum annual load of total phosphorus, which includes a finite amount allocated to all existing and future wastewater treatment plants.

The Chatfield publically owned wastewater treatment plants are advanced treatment systems, which already meet low levels of phosphorus in their discharges.

As development occurs in the watershed, wastewater treatment plants must expand to meet this growth demand.

Douglas County has been listed in recent years as one of the fastest growing counties in the country.

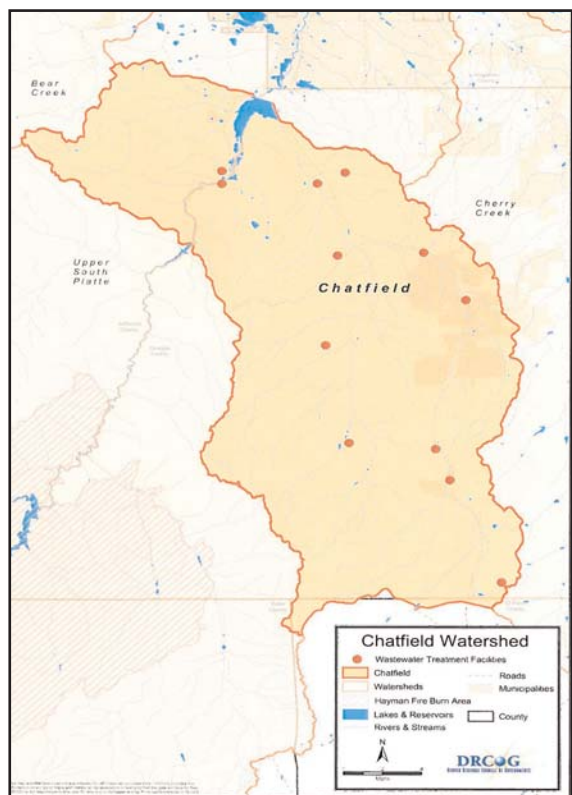
Once a wastewater treatment plant approaches its fixed phosphorus wasteload allocation, the operator must obtain additional point source credit before increasing wastewater discharge into the watershed surface or groundwater.

The trade program allows for the wastewater treatment plant expansion, while protecting established and regulated water quality beneficial uses.

The Authority expects trading to become a highly used mechanism for managing phosphorus sources in the watershed.

Trade phosphorus is also becoming a very valuable commodity with the price ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 per pound, dependent on the type of trade project.

To learn more about the Chatfield trading program visit www.chatfieldwatershed.org.



Chatfield Watershed Map

SCEP Success Stories....

A profile of college students and their experiences with NRCS

Student Career

Amber Dawn Rink

Amber is a 19-year-old SCEP student from Canyon, Texas, where she attends West Texas A&M University. She is a junior with a double major in Ag Business and Economics and Animal Science.

Currently, Amber is doing her summer internship with the Holly Field Office working with the Northeast Prowers Conservation District. She plans to return to NRCS every summer until she graduates.

She chose NRCS to do her internship because she is originally from the Holly area and she wanted to assist the producers that she has grown up around.

She enjoys field work and the various projects within NRCS. Upon graduation, she would like a full-time position working with NRCS in the Holly Field Office.



In her spare time, Amber likes to read books, work cattle, ride her horse, and spend time with her fiancé, family, and friends.



Here, Jennifer is tightening up a fence at Camp Rocky in preparation for llamas, but in her spare time, Jennifer likes to spend time with her family and her dog, Jasley.

Jennifer M. Griffin

Jennifer attends the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff located in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. She is a 20-year-old junior majoring in Agriculture Business.

This is Jennifer's second year as a SCEP student with Colorado NRCS. In 2006, she was assigned to the Brighton Field Office and this year she is interning in the Colorado Springs Field Office.

Her most memorable experience working with the agency was when a group of SCEPs got together in Byers, Colorado, and they almost stepped on a Bull snake. She also remembers having to do field work in 30-degree weather.

Overall, Jennifer appreciates the knowledge and skills she has gained by working with the agency and, upon graduation, she hopes to return to Colorado and work full time with NRCS as a Soil Conservationist.

Experience Program